

CABINET MEETING 20th June 2007

The following Statements and Questions had been registered by the time of publication.

REGISTERED SPEAKERS

There were 3 notices of intention to make a statement at the meeting. None of the questions relate to items on the Agenda.

- Raymond Friel, Headteacher, St Gregory's Secondary School (Voluntary Aided)
Re: Denominational Transport
- Dr Philip Rogers
Re: Transport to Denominational Schools
- Simon Gane, Chair of Governors, St Gregory's Catholic College
Re: Charging for Denominational Transport

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1 **Question from:** Mik Phelps

As a requirement for submitting a funding application for the Digital Arts Media Project to Bath Communities Partnership, there is need to have confirmation of the continued availability of the use of the Southside Y&C Building. Please could you advise upon the current and future situation regarding this Building and the starting date for the proposed building works which will be providing disabled access to the upper floor where this Project is proposed to operate.

The gross Project value in terms of a six month investment into this Building is currently some £127,000 which will necessarily increase over the continuing years. The Project is of direct benefit to the South West Bath Community as a whole as well as affording the potential for supporting a much wider area additional Project.

I await reply on the availability of this Building over the next 5 years and the commencement date for the Disabled Access to the upper floor area in order to justify the initial Project investment in both time and cash from funders as well as to meet the requirements for sustainability of this Project.

Answer from: Councillor Malcolm Hanney

At this stage it is not possible to give a firm commitment to the future availability of this building to support the Digital Arts Media Project. The Council's Youth service is, however, committed to continued provision out of these premises, is

broadly supportive of this proposal and will consider it further when full information is available.

Some limited DDA works are programmed for these premises for the current financial year, which will include improvements to access to the upper floor. These works will be undertaken as part of the general programme and a timescale has not yet been agreed. Further works will be undertaken in future years when funding for reasonable adaptations becomes available.

On 16-July-07 Cllr Hanney provided the following further information:

When providing the necessary advice to enable me to respond to your question at the Cabinet, Property Services incorrectly reported that some limited DDA works were programmed for these premises within the current financial year to include access improvements to the upper floor of the building.

However, on further investigation, it would appear that this is not going to be the case and whilst a DDA audit has been carried out in respect of the premises, there is no definitive schedule of work programmed. Until the future of the building has been formally determined it is unlikely that any significant work related to DDA will be undertaken.

I apologise for the misleading information given to you and I will be asking Property Services / Democratic Services to post on the Council's website an amendment to the answer previously given and to copy all Councillors

2 Question from: Cllr Nathan Hartley

In February 2007 the Council agreed to set aside a sum of up to £300,000, should resources allow, to protect face-to-face and other frontline services in the Youth Service. What progress has been made in allocating these funds since the Council AGM and when will it be possible to give some certainty to those frontline workers (particularly in Youth Centres) who currently do not know if funding will be available after the summer?

Answer from: Councillor Chris Watt

In February 2007 the Council agreed that "should resources allow, a sum of up to £300k be set aside to maintain face-to-face Youth services (whilst continuing with the restructure) and other front line services, as deemed appropriate by the Executive, from the reductions included with the budget".

The Council's Cabinet, taking advice from the s151 officer, has yet to make a judgement that 'resources allow' a sum of up to £300k to be set aside for the purposes outlined above. This will continue to be kept under review. The June 2006/07 Revenue and capital out-turn report sets out the council's financial position at 1 April 2007 together with implications from 2006/07 for 2007/08 and future years. The report shows that general reserves are higher than expected this is as a result of one-off factors, while the report also highlights the on-going impact of pressures on the budget which are £1.8M per annum higher than expected when the 2007/08 was set in February 2007. The Cabinet will receive the first quarter 2007/08 financial monitoring report in September which will include an update on progress in achieving corporate efficiency savings assumed in the budget.

The re-structure of the Youth Service has focused primarily on achieving more efficient management. Currently limited reductions in 'face to face' youth work have been made and the management changes have significantly increased the proportion of the Youth Service budget spent on 'face to face' youth work. While the full year impact of these savings is approximately £200,000 (against a target of £380,000), the savings for 2007/8 (net of redundancy costs) are much less than this. Therefore, there remains a significant budget pressure for Children's Service. Every effort continues to be made to protect front line services.

3 Question from: Councillor Paul Crossley

Are we still on track to implement Cllr Gerry Curran's delivery plan of separate collection of cooked food waste in March 2008 and what steps are being taken to ensure that this change is effected smoothly and all residents are informed?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

It is more accurate to say that the inherited financial plan made a provisional budget allocation for 08/09 financial year. The kerbside recycling collection service is currently out to tender and prices requested include options for the provision of a food waste collection service.

Supplementary question from: Councillor Paul Crossley

Can the Cabinet member give an idea of when the tender prices will be evaluated and when it is anticipated that contracts will be awarded?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

This process will be completed within 6 months.

4 Question from: Councillor Paul Crossley

Would the Cabinet member agree with me that a move to same day collection for all waste streams is a good idea and will he give a timetable for the introduction of 'same day collections' for refuse, green boxes etc? Will he also outline what is planned in terms of an information campaign for residents? Does he agree that a trial of the scheme in one area would be useful before the scheme is introduced across the authority?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

Cllr Crossley will have read the Conservative May 2007 Local Election Manifesto which contained the following commitment to waste collection:

- *Implement a same day household refuse and recycling collection service*

throughout the district
Given the Liberal Democrat May 2007 Local Election Manifesto contained no commitment to such an initiative, I am delighted the Leader of the Liberal Democrat group is declaring his support for the policy of the new administration. I can assure him plans to implement this manifesto commitment are progressing.

5	Question from:	Councillor Paul Crossley
<p>Will the Cabinet member explain what consultations were carried out with businesses in Bath before the decision was taken to cancel the evening collection of cardboard from commercial premises?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>Discussions with the former Liberal Democrat Executive Member, Cllr Gerry Curran, took place earlier in the year. The Council is no longer in a position to provide this service because of Health and Safety implications because of lone working operation.</i></p>		
Supplementary question from:		Councillor Paul Crossley
<p>The Cabinet member does not appear to have answered my question. There used to be both morning and evening collections of commercial cardboard. Do the Health and Safety implications relate to both morning and evening collections, or only evening?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>No. The morning collection is carried out by two operatives and there are therefore no health and safety issues due to lone working.</i></p>		

6	Question from:	Councillor Paul Crossley
<p>Thank you for agreeing to meet me to discuss signalisation options with regard to the Haycombe Cemetery junction at The Hollow. Could you let me know what you plan to do with the detailed work Haycombe Drive residents and the highways department and local councillors carried out over the last 5 months with regard to the state of the highway in Haycombe Drive?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>A consultation questionnaire was sent out to residents in the Haycombe Drive area during the early part of April this year. Responses to the questionnaire are still being received. As soon as all expected responses have been received the information will be collated.</i></p>		

7

Question from:	Councillor Paul Crossley
Does the Cabinet member agree with me that the wishes of parents and teachers, who would like to see Culverhay Secondary School made coeducational, should be respected? What steps is he taking to achieve this?	
Answer from:	Councillor Chris Watt
<p><i>In September 2005 the Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure (EYCL) Overview and Scrutiny Panel began a comprehensive review of Secondary School provision in order to provide a strategic framework for the future. The final report of the panel (8th January 2007) included a recommendation which referred specifically to Culverhay and co-educational provision:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R16. The Authority should actively seek to increase the number of co-educational places available in Bath through changing the status of two existing schools (Culverhay and Oldfield). A feasibility study should be undertaken to assess what would be required in order for these two schools to take pupils of both genders. This study should include information on where each school is likely to draw its pupils from were the change to take place and an assessment of the likely impact on other schools within the Consortium. <p><i>At the EYCL panel meeting on 12th March 2007, the Executive Member for Children's Service accepted this recommendation and agreed that an initial feasibility study should be undertaken in Autumn 2007 with a report back to the panel by December 2007. This feasibility study is being undertaken and its conclusions to the new Children and Young People Panel on 26th November 2007 will inform a decision whether to enter formal consultation on a change of status for Culver hay School.</i></p>	

8

Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
Is the Leader aware of the debate in the letters pages of the Bath Chronicle which was sparked by a letter from Mr Steve Devrell published on 31st May 2007? What steps are planned to address the issues he raised?	
Answer from:	Councillor Francine Haeberling
<p>1. Yes.</p> <p>2. <i>I'm afraid that after 12 years of Liberal Democrat dominance on Bath and North East Somerset Council and, in particular, the previous five years of a Liberal Democrat Council Executive member overseeing issues such as bins, litter, and public toilets it is quite rich for Cllr Symonds to demand a plan to address the concerns expressed on the Bath Chronicle letters pages after just one month of the new administration.</i></p> <p><i>However, let me take this opportunity to assure local residents it is a priority for the new administration to improve the condition of Bath's urban environment and create a greener, cleaner community throughout the district.</i></p>	

9

Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
This Council collects plastic bottles for recycling if they are made of PET, PVC and HDPE, but it will not collect other plastic containers made of these particular types of plastic. Why not?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>It is interesting that despite the Liberal Democrats holding the Cabinet position of Sustainability and the Environment for the last five years, Councillor Symonds has decided to raise this issue at the first meeting of the new Conservative administration.</i></p> <p><i>Perhaps the former post holder, his Liberal Democrat colleague Councillor Gerry Curran, would be in a better position to brief him about this issue and why such a commitment was not contained within the Liberal Democrat May 2007 Local Election Manifesto?</i></p> <p><i>Another suggestion would be for Cllr Symonds to contact me so a comprehensive briefing about this subject can be arranged with Officers.</i></p>	
Supplementary question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
How long will the Cabinet member continue to blame the previous administration for things which were not their responsibility?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>I agree that this needs closer examination. This administration has committed to improving the Council's recycling percentages.</i>	

10

Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
Licenses are regularly given for events in Bath and North East Somerset, but rubbish created at such events is not separated, so for example cans, bottles and paper are sent directly to landfill. A simple condition in the License permission for the applicant to recycle cans, bottles and paper would enable the Council to extend its recycling to events. What action will the Cabinet member take to make sure that waste is recycled from these public events?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The authority stipulates this as a condition of issuing a contract to use our land. For events where we do not control the land, we state in the Council's Licensing Policy for any application for a Premises Licence, which includes open spaces, that we, the Licensing Authority, will consider in particular a number of additional criteria one of which includes the steps taken or proposed by the applicant with particular regard to the recycling of glasses, bottles and cans from their premises.</i></p>	

<i>Whilst this above statement is in our policy as something we would expect the applicant to include in their operating schedule, if the applicant does not provide a satisfactory statement on this and we do not have any representations against the application then the licence may be granted because Licensing is not legally empowered to insist on its inclusion.</i>	
Supplementary question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
Can the Cabinet member explain then why there is only one event where there has been separate collections?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The question has a historical context and I will need to investigate and will report back to him in the future.</i></p> <p>Further answer provided later by Cllr Gerrish: <i>A requirement is made for all events to address this. Many events have had separate collections but the cost levied by collectors of recyclables can be a deterrent to event organisers. Officers will continue to require materials to be separated as part of a contract to use our land.</i></p> <p><i>The current contract requires event organisers to "be responsible for providing suitable facilities at the Event to allow for the recycling of waste, particularly glass bottles and jars, cans, plastic bottles and newspapers and magazines by the Licensee and visitors, unless agreed otherwise by the Director of Customer Services."</i></p> <p><i>Very few of the smaller events currently recycle, but we encourage the larger ones to do so, as in the terms of the Licence. Our current advice is that event organisers should approach Network Recycling.</i></p>	

11	Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
What is the target quota for converting areas for Living Over the Shops (LOTS) and for bringing basements into use for accommodation in the B&NES Local Plan and is the Council anywhere near meeting this target?		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>There are no specific targets for converting areas for 'Living Over the Shops' or for bringing basements into use for accommodation in the Local Plan that was agreed by Full Council on 29th March 2007</i></p>		

12	Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
How many people are there on the Homeseekers register and on Somer Housing's books either without homes or living in temporary/unsuitable accommodation in B&NES?		

Answer from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p><i>At the time of writing there are 5,624 households on the Homeseekers Register, of which 63 are in Band A. Band A includes all households who are homeless and living in temporary accommodation, are statutory overcrowded or have an urgent medical or social need to move. Please note that a "household" can range from a single individual to a large family, and as such is not the same as number of people. In addition the above figure will not include those households who are sharing with friends or family, unless the sharing results in either statutory overcrowding or an urgent social or medical award.</i></p> <p><i>There are currently 641 households on the Somer CHT transfer list. While all of these households are housed and in permanent accommodation, it is likely that some of these will be living in overcrowded and hence unsuitable accommodation. However, it is likely that some of these clients will also be on the Homeseekers Register.</i></p> <p><i>In future, because of the continuous fluctuation of these figures could I suggest that factual information of this kind could be obtained by contacting the relevant officer, Graham Sabourn, or me outside the formal Cabinet meeting question process.</i></p>	

13	Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
<p>What does the Cabinet Member intend to do about the chronic shortage of Social and Affordable Housing in the Authority?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p><i>The Council and Local Strategic Partnership agreed the Housing Strategy 2005-2010 in July 2006. Nine Delivery Plans are being developed, including one specifically focused on the delivery of affordable housing. This Delivery Plan is nearing completion and along with the remaining Delivery Plans will ultimately be presented to the Cabinet for approval early next year following extensive consultation. A copy of the draft affordable housing delivery plan has been sent directly to Cllr Symonds for his consideration.</i></p>		

14	Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
<p>How many empty homes are there in Bath and North East Somerset?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p><i>483 private sector empty homes.</i></p> <p><i>In future, because of the continuous fluctuation of these figures could I suggest that factual information of this kind could be obtained by contacting the relevant officer, Graham Sabourn, or me outside the formal Cabinet meeting question process.</i></p>		

15	Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
How many houses in the Council's area have been brought back into occupation under the powers given to the Council under the Government's Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) that were introduced in the Housing Act 2004?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<i>None.</i>		

16	Question from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
The Council has reportedly been allocated £87,380 by the Department of Health to aid with implementation of the smoking ban. Could the Cabinet member explain on what this money will be spent?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<i>I refer Councillor Roberts to the decision register entry dated 21st February for full details. However, for her convenience I have arranged for a paper copy of the decision papers to be sent to her following this meeting.</i>		

17	Question from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
What efforts are being made by the Council to work with businesses to implement and enforce the ban on smoking in public enclosed spaces which comes into force on July 1st? Specifically, what is being done to address issues of nuisances (especially noise and litter) caused by smokers outside pubs, bars, restaurants and other public buildings?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>A schedule of work undertaken and planned by the Smokefree team is available from the Assistant Director of Environmental Services. I will ask him to forward Councillor Roberts a copy</i>		
	Supplementary question from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
Is the Cabinet member aware of the smoking problem in the grounds of the RUH and will he work with the PCT to help tackle this problem?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>I have read of this problem and I will be happy to work with local members and the RUH to deal with it.</i>		

18	Question from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
What measures are being taken to extend Dial a Ride to the R.U.H?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>The scheme has recently been amended on a trial basis to cover all areas of Bath, including journeys to RUH, between 9.45am and 2.30pm from Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays. This trial will be reviewed next month.</i>		
	Supplementary question from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
Is the Cabinet member aware that the Chew Valley Dial a Ride is not being used? And has he seen the letter in the press from Action for Pensioners relating to the need for such a scheme to be made available to Keynsham residents?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>I have not seen the letter but I agree that the possibilities should be explored. I am aware that the PCT has held discussions with SWAN about providing a similar scheme between Keynsham and the RUH. I hope to be able to explore these opportunities soon.</i>		

19	Question from:	Councillor Ian Gilchrist
Noting that plans have already been in existence for about 25 years to remove through traffic from Claverton St in Widcombe by creating a two-way scheme for Rossiter Rd, on behalf of the Widcombe Association the members for Widcombe (Cllrs Ian Gilchrist and Brook Whelan) request a start date for work on the Rossiter Rd Two-Way scheme, budget for which was agreed in the amended Transport Capital Program, ref E1608, dated On or After March 31, 2007. Budget spend is due to begin in 2008-09, so the Association would like to see the work start in May 2008.		
	Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>In response to a direct request to me by Councillor Whelan, I will be contacting the Widcombe Residents Association to arrange a meeting to discuss these plans in due course.</i>		
	Supplementary question from:	Councillor Ian Gilchrist
Would the Cabinet member not agree that if a budget allocation is made in one year, it should be spent in the same year?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish

The member's comment seems logical. I will provide a response within 5 working days.

Further answer provided later by Cllr Gerrish: *That would be the anticipated case however matters beyond control or issues that arise subsequently may affect capital forward plans.*

20 **Question from:** Councillor Nicholas Coombes

The World Heritage Status bestowed on our city is a matter of great pride and a strong advertisement of our tourist industry. How will the council manage modern development within this setting to ensure a good quality of life for the inhabitants?

Answer from: Councillor David Hawkins

Development is managed through the normal planning process, strengthened in Bath by Local Plan Policies relating to the City's World Heritage and Conservation Area status. These policies do not in any way preclude modern architecture, but seek to ensure that new development preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the City.

Supplementary question from: Councillor Nicholas Coombes

Does the Cabinet member support the calls to balance the city's world heritage status and its need to encourage sensitive development?

Answer from: Councillor David Hawkins

There is a fine balance and it is sometimes a cause of concern. For example, four attempts were made to list Churchill House but in the event this failed. The Urban Regeneration Panel advises on such issues.

21 **Question from:** Councillor Nicholas Coombes

The introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act led the council to close some public toilets in order to upgrade the remainder. Now that this has been achieved, what plans does Cllr Gerrish have to improve and re-open or provide new public toilets in and around Bath?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

In February 2003, the Liberal Democrat minority administration passed a budget cutting the 2003/04 public convenience budget by approximately one third. The Liberal Democrat Executive Member for Sustainability and the Environment, former councillor Rosemary Todd, recommended the closure of sixteen public conveniences across Bath and North East Somerset.

After two Overview and Scrutiny reviews and robust campaigns by various councillors, in particular former Conservative Councillor Sarah Webb, this number was reduced to eight.

I am very surprised that Councillor Coombes should refer to this closure programme as an achievement.

The new administration will take no lessons from Liberal Democrat councillors about public convenience provision. Residents will also note the lack of any reference to improve or re-open public conveniences in the May 2007 Liberal Democrat Local Election Manifesto.

Supplementary question from:

Councillor Nicholas Coombes

Is the Cabinet member satisfied with the current level of provision?

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

Local authorities do not have a statutory responsibility to provide public conveniences. We intend to keep this under review, within our existing resources.

22 Question from: Councillor Andy Furse

Is the Cabinet member considering responding to the calls from the residents of the Royal Crescent in returning to basement collections? Their concerns, which are well documented, are mainly related to refuse being left out on streets in this international tourist location.

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

Residents of these properties and any others in the Council area can request an assisted collection if the current arrangements cause them difficulties. The visual impact of the change of refuse collection point has been dealt with by the former Liberal Democrat Council Executive member for Sustainability and the Environment, Councillor Gerry Curran, who agreed that collections would be undertaken at a time to minimise any such impacts.

23 Question from: Councillor Roger Symonds

So far the Conservatives have made a frightening start to cutting services in this city, with the Bath South Local Committee and the Student Liaison Committee. Can the Executive Member confirm that the housing department's budget is safe from such cuts and will continue at the same level of investment in increasing social and affordable housing and reducing homelessness?

Answer from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

Neither the abolition of the Student Liaison Committee (SLC) nor the discontinuation of the three-year Bath South Area Committee (BSAC) pilot can be considered a housing service cut. In relation to the SLC, the current budgetary provision given by the Council is protected for 2007/08. In relation to the BSAC, to my understanding, this pilot did not have control over housing spending. However, Cllr Symonds will be delighted to learn the new administration has resisted the temptation to implement a £100,000 cut to the housing budget advocated by his Liberal Democrat colleague Cllr David Bellotti as reported by 'The Midsomer Norton, Radstock and District Journal' on 22nd February 2007. Therefore I can confirm there will be no reduction in the housing budget for 2007/08.

24 Question from: Councillor Will Sandry

Liberal Democrat Ward Councillors in Oldfield ward have been campaigning for CCTV to be installed in Moorland Road since at least 2002, so welcome the apparent Conservative support for this Liberal Democrat policy as promised in Conservative election literature. Can the Cabinet member give a timetable for the installation of CCTV in Moorland Road?

Answer from: Councillor Malcolm Hanney

No. The Conservative manifesto commitment stated 'Increase the provision of mobile and permanent CCTV technology to reduce the fear of crime and catch criminals.' No specific undertaking was given as regards Moorland Road which will be considered along with other requests and priorities in due course as the Conservative minority administration deliver manifesto commitments subject to the support of Council.

From the question it is clear that local LibDems have not been particularly effective over the past five years if they failed to persuade their colleagues on the Cabinet to give a priority to this issue in terms of budget priorities when they were leading the Administration.

25 Question from: Councillor Cherry Beath

Several areas of Bath & NE Somerset have developed highly successful Community Safety Action Groups (CSAGs). These are now being replaced, without consultations, by PACTs (Police And Community Together). Can the Cabinet Member assure me that the voice of the resident will be equally heard in the new PACTs as they were in the CSAGs and outline how the new PACTs will be funded?

Answer from: Councillor Malcolm Hanney

Community Safety Action Groups are not being replaced by PACT's. They will continue to operate through the auspices of the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership in close liaison with the Police, where there continues to be a commitment from residents, business and agencies to address community safety issues.

PACT's have evolved through the rollout of Neighbourhood Policing and are the key forum for which the Police and partners can raise community safety concerns and agree on priority areas of work.

There has been active consultation with the CSAG's on the rollout of Neighbourhood Policing and the role CSAG's have. The Community Safety and Drugs Partnership (CDSP) hosted a launch event for all CSAG's in August 2006 which provided all CSAG members the opportunity to raise any initial thoughts, issues or concerns. Ongoing consultation with CSAG's has continued as PACT's have been rolled out across the three Police Sectors. Consequently, some CSAG's will continue and feed into PACT's and some CSAG's have disbanded and PACT's have become the main community safety forum.

PACT's are co-ordinated and managed by the Police where appropriately assisted by the joint CDSP team. There is no financial impact on the Council.

Supplementary question from:

Councillor Cherry Beath

The main point of my question was to ask for an assurance that residents will still be heard under the new arrangements. How often will meetings of the PACTS be held? Is there a funding shortfall of £216,000?

Answer from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard (in Councillor Hanney's absence)

There have been suggestions that the new arrangements will result in reduced public involvement but the intention is to improve public involvement. The CSAGs will at first run in parallel with the PACT. The deficit she mentions is in a future budget and does not affect current service levels.

26

Question from:

Councillor Cherry Beath

A letter to the Bath Chronicle published on 31st May 2007 from Mr Devrell, a former resident of Bath and now school teacher from Solihull, criticised the state of Bath City Centre particularly anti-social behaviour of drunks on the street. His letter has caused public concern, and calls for the Council to address this.

In the light of this, would The Leader of The Council consider setting up a City Centre Working Group, which should include councillors from the city centre wards, to target and address such issues? Such a group should also include representation from residents, City centre businesses and other relevant bodies and interested parties.

I would like the Cabinet to note that, as I am given to understand, some European Cities such as Amsterdam run schemes where rough sleepers are given an incentive to pick up City centre litter and recyclable items, and are paid a small amount for every bag that they hand in to appointed collection points. A City Centre Working Group would have a remit to consider and evaluate creative

solutions to the issues raised, and draw from good practice elsewhere. Would the Cabinet member agree with me that this idea is worthy of exploration?	
Answer from:	Councillor Francine Haerberling
<p><i>1. I refer Cllr Beath to the answer given to her ward colleague Cllr Symonds on the letter by Mr. Devrell and subsequent publicity.</i></p> <p><i>2. Regarding the suggestion for a City Centre Working Group, I would suggest the existing City Centre Management Group which is made up of relevant cabinet members, ward councillors for Abbey / Kingsmead, officers from various departments who manage services in the city centre, the business community and partners (e.g. the police) fulfils the remit outlined in the question. The group has agreed Terms of Reference and the area of operation has been defined. We are currently in the process of developing new arrangements for the management of the city centre.</i></p> <p><i>3. Perhaps Cllr Beath could write to or meet with Peter Rowntree who chairs the City Centre Management Group and explore her idea further.</i></p>	
Supplementary question from:	Councillor Cherry Beath
Is it not true that there was no overall control under the previous administration? Does she not agree that City Centre Management Group should include as a particular focus the issues raised here?	
Answer from:	Councillor Francine Haerberling
<i>No, I do not agree.</i>	